

## ITEM NO. 4

<b>MEETING</b>	Plas Tan y Bwlch Management Board
<b>DATE</b>	24 March 2021
<b>TITLE</b>	<b>HOUSE MANAGER'S REPORT</b>
<b>REPORT BY</b>	House Manager, Plas Tan y Bwlch
<b>PURPOSE</b>	To update Members on progress.

### 1.0 **OUR PRODUCTS/SERVICES**

- 1.1 Now that we have a clear vision of what Plas Tan Y Bwlch is aiming to provide, which is a B&B accommodation, with the chance of new business further down the line, this makes it easier to market/sell our products and services. Whilst we are predominantly aiming to provide B&B, we must also take into consideration current bookings within the calendar already such as weddings, group bookings and the hiring of the venue.
- 1.2 However, with the furlough extension, it gives us an opportunity to provide dinner at little or no extra cost and could even result in profit making. It also provides the catering staff a chance to possibly secure their hours and reduce the number of redundancies that we possibly might have faced. During the last period it was clear many of the guests were disappointed not to have been offered dinner. When considering an evening meal, we are approaching a much more 'casual' menu and will be offering a 'Bar Meal' rather than a 3-course meal or 'self-serve' at a set time.

### 2.0 **PRICING**

- 2.1 In order for a new pricing list to be conducted, market research has been carried out to see what other establishments were charging for their product and services that had similar services to Plas Tan Y Bwlch, I have looked within Plas' radius in order to compare and go for the best option. It was agreed by the Board that selling 'too cheap' could lead to down selling and questioning of 'why is it so cheap' leading to speculations of 'it must be awful'.
- 2.2 Here are some examples of what I found:

#### **Low Season Mid-week:**

**Gwesty Seren - £95 Twin Room (breakfast not inc).**

**Hen Fecws** - £95 Twin Room.

**Grapes hotel** £85 (double) - *(Adding £5 extra on weekends)*.

**Oakley** £210 – 2 double, 2 singles.

**Family room- (2 adults 2 children)** - Varies between £150-£204.

**Single** - varies between £40-£80.

- 2.3 Having searched for prices throughout the year, I found that accommodations at this moment in time were not increasing prices during the peak times as they may have previously done pre covid, we must take this into account as we do not want to oversell and have zero occupancy levels.
- 2.4 My thoughts for a new pricing strategy would be 'something in the middle' due to the condition of the building and the budget that we would need to be able to bring prices up.

**Example:**

**Single** – Remain as what it's currently being sold as - £60.00

**Double** – bringing the £80.00 up to £85 (not a huge difference but still appealing and not over priced).

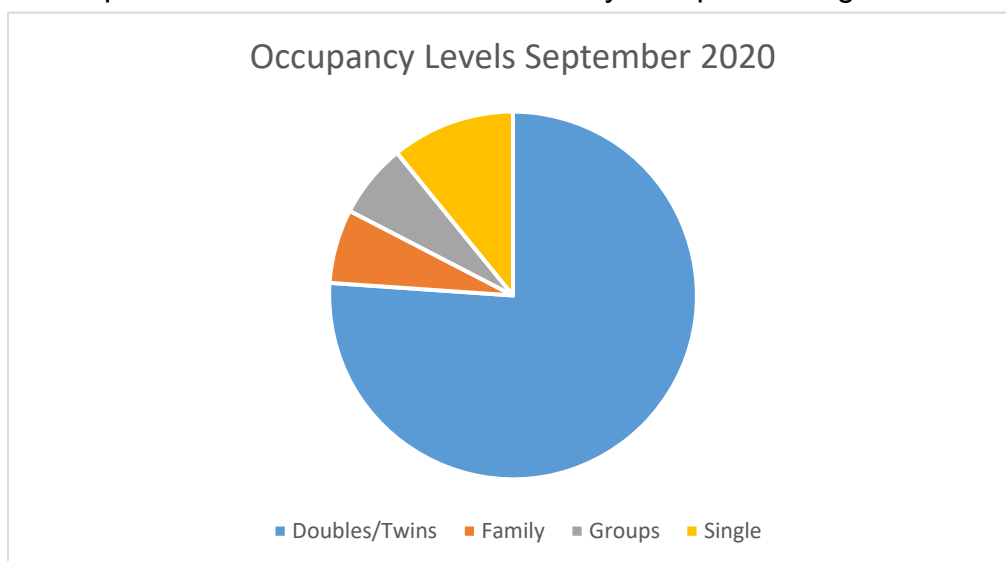
**Family Room** – flat rate of £150 (charging for the room rather than per person) this makes it easier then to secure larger rooms for families rather than single or double occupants whom are paying the minimum for a family room because they were only paying a two person occupancy rate.

- 2.5 These prices are based on a 'Covid market' these can always be increased when businesses are back to normal and they start competing again.

3.0 **AUDIENCE**

- 3.1 Looking at Plas' trial B&B in September, the majority of our customers were in the age range of between **25-45**.

- 3.2 Here is a pie to show what rooms were mostly occupied during that time:



- 3.3 As you can see, the double/twin rooms were most popular – the audience were mostly couples and friends coming to the area for a short break. Majority were here for the exploring of Snowdonia.
- 3.4 Although the Business Model is predominantly B&B, we have managed to secure group bookings both old and new business, this is very promising considering we are in a pandemic.
- 3.5 Here is an example of the type of group bookings we have booked in:

<b><u>Booking</u></b>	<b><u>Occupancy</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Price</u></b>
Red Bull	Hire of Venue	20-26 July 2021	Est 15,000
Adult Educational Music Course.	20 Rooms & 3 meeting rooms – Dinner B&B/ Buffet Lunch	8-14 August 2021	TBC Est £7000 excl meeting rooms/dinner.
Wedding	Full Day/B&B (numbers tbc)	11 <sup>th</sup> September 2021	£4026 excl guests b&b
Red Bull	Hire of Venue	21-27 September 2021	Est 15,000
Postgraduate Academic Retreat	50 people – TBC	12-17 Sept	Tbc
London Uni	TBC	18-22 October 2021	TBC
Wedding	Full House (possibly will need to use annex)	4 <sup>th</sup> December 2021	Est 5,000 excl Guest B&B
Millennium New Year Walking Club	Hire of Venue	27-2 Jan 2022	£9,600

- 3.6 These are estimated prices that have not yet been agreed with the customers, although I can confirm that the Weddings have been agreed. This table excludes bookings made through Airbnb (individual guests).

#### 4.0 **PLAS CHALET**

- 4.1 The chalet is currently being rented out 3 days a week each month for £610 for work purposes, the individual has an agreement with Plas that the chalet will be available to him until the end of May. We have also bookings in for the summer from other customers, the customer currently renting the chalet is aware that he will have to stay at Plas during these times. Potentially the customer is looking for a long-term contract within the chalet which secures the occupancy of the chalet until 2022.

## How will we promote and market our B&B?

**Own Booking System** – in the process. 'Free to book' and 'Q book' website which links into other sites such as booking.com, trivago etc.

**Local Newspapers** – Golwg, north wales pioneer, Llafar bro etc. We intend to market each aspect that PTYB offers, not just the B&B side.

**Mail Merge** – contacting old customers letting them know what we now offer and inviting them to come and stay with us.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

Competitions will be created for people to promote. They can only win by sharing, liking our page and tagging their friends.

### **WORD OF MOUTH**

**Photoshoots** – using our locations for their photoshoots. Some photographers will pay the venue to use their location but also promotes our venue for free.

**Partnership Working** – Informing partners and working together, for example – Ffestiniog Railway Events – offering accommodation. Asking Go North Wales, Snowdonia 360 etc to promote our accommodation informing customers that activities such as zip world are close by.

**Google Ads** – when searching for 'a place to stay' – that Plas Tan Y Bwlch appears, at the moment it does not which decreases chances of bookings being made. Also, when searching for Plas Tan Y Bwlch - 'Study Centre' appears which we will need to change– in order to attract different customers.

**Pay for Advertisement** – you can pay for facebook to advertise your business/page by paying a small charge which enables you to reach a wider audience or a 'suitable' audience.

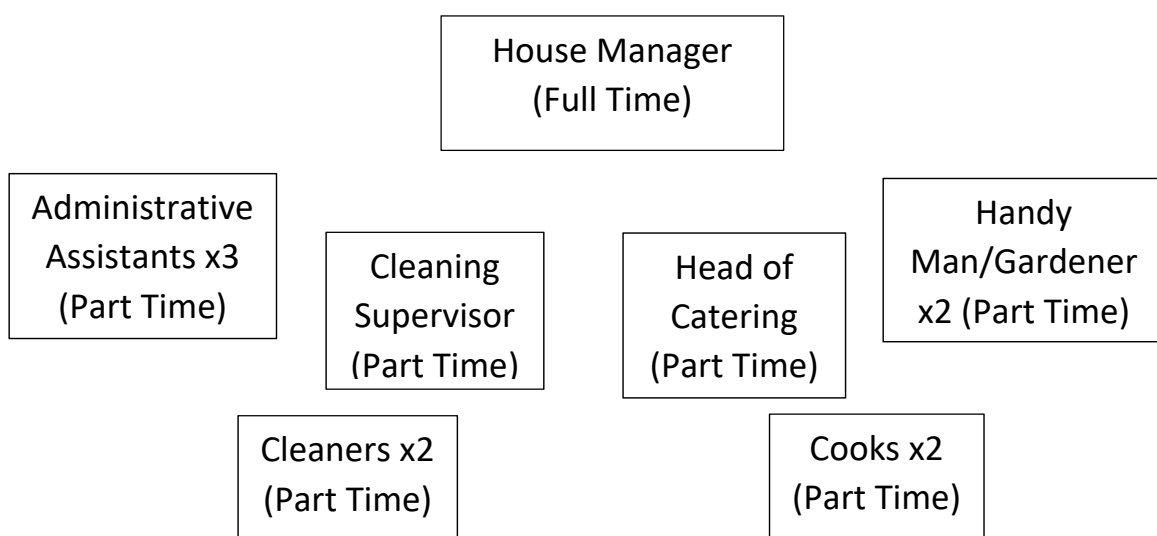
Using websites such as Wales Tourist Online to promote which incurs a fee of £99 a year.

- 4.2 To enable us to use the correct marketing platforms, a budget for marketing will be useful. Having looked at 2021/2022 budget, it shows we have £2,500 available. We will be able to use this budget for targeting an audience of our choice on social media and promote our business in brochures and websites as mentioned above.
- 4.3 In order to be able to do the above, we must firstly and foremost ensure that the building is fit for purpose in respect to the maintenance issues that have been highlighted. Some of the rooms have deteriorated greatly and work will need to be completed in order to take pictures for us to be able to promote on these platforms.
- 4.4 Reputation is key, and for Plas Tan Y Bwlch to succeed we need to rectify these issues first.

## 5.0 THE BUILDING'S GENERAL CONDITION

- 5.1 We are currently working specifically on 3 main bedrooms within the Main House. Unfortunately, as the building has deteriorated in the last year, 3 of our 'best rooms' have been affected with damp. We currently have contractors working on this but have informed us that it will need re-pointing eventually. As we are keen to open as soon as the restrictions have been lifted, this is not an option as it would cause Plas Tan Y Bwlch to lose 2 doubles and 1 single, therefore rectifying the problem with a temporary solution that can be maintained is the best option.
- 5.2 The contractors are also working on the annex and the hallway on the ground floor which is next to the annex building. As mentioned in previous meetings, the annex will be out of use for the time being due to the extensive work that it requires, and we will be predominantly concentrating on our main building and ground floor bedrooms. Although we have rising damp near the ground floor bedrooms in the hallway, we have been informed that again it can be maintained for a period but will need to be looked at in the near future. The contractors have also informed the House Manager that an inspection for the chimneys will be carried out as this may be the root of most of the problems alongside the re-pointing of the building.
- 5.3 With the support of the Property Manager, Plas Tan Y Bwlch should be ready to re-open when restrictions are lifted. We expect to be able to let out 20 bedrooms, with hopes that perhaps one more will be finished and will bring it up to a total of bedrooms to 21. To avoid customers roaming into the annex, we have decided that rooms across the archway will not be used, by doing this we are losing 4 bedrooms, but as mentioned previously, reputation is key and we do not intend to start off on bad reviews. It was announced on Friday the 12<sup>th</sup> that self-contained accommodation would be able to re-open at the end of March, unfortunately, Plas is not in the position to able to offer this service and in my opinion would be best to wait until shared facilities accommodation can reopen.
- 5.4 I am currently in the process of purchasing a new carpet for Plas Tan Y Bwlch's stairs and hallways and awaiting 3 quotes to compare which is best. I will also be purchasing new mattresses as we have had complaints that they are not up to standard, this of course depends on the budget I will have left after purchasing the carpet. I will also be meeting with the 'Friends' of PTYB as they are keen to help with the reopening of Plas.

## Staffing Restructure



- 5.5 Plas Tan Y Bwlch have reduced staffing levels due to the impact Covid has had on the business. We have lost a total of 6 and there is still a chance other members of staff will take redundancy. The office staff is now at a total of 4 including the House Manager with only one full time post, resulting in 3 full time staff being made redundant. The catering team have gone from having 6 to 4 part time staff reducing their hours by half, and the cleaners are remaining at 3 members of part time staff with extra hours for a casual.
- 5.6 As mentioned in the 'Products and Services', I am now hoping for us to increase the hours originally given to the Catering Team, this means we can offer dinner and reduce the number of further redundancies and save local jobs. It also means that we will not need outsider caterers for weddings and events, although that option remains open if we realize that dinner is not a success. The Welsh Government has also announced that the furlough scheme has been extended until September 2021, this enables us to try out the idea of offering dinner for our guests.
- 5.7 As for the Gardener and Handy Man, their hours will remain the same for now and will stick to two days per week. We are hoping to get volunteers on board with the gardening and have conducted a 'sign up form'. The gardener will be working closely with the 'Friends' of PTYB and staff to ensure that the gardens can be maintained through volunteering and minimum expenditure. The grass cutting will remain contracted under Property Services.